

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MADRID 04936 301344Z  
ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 4936

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1  
TAGS: PINT,SP  
SUBJECT: THE PSOE: WHO DO THEY THINK THEY ARE?

1. THE PSOE'S YOUNG (MOSTLY IN THEIR THIRTIES) LEADERSHIP THINKS IT CAN WIN IT ALL NEXT TIME, AND THEY HAVE A CHANCE. BUT THE CARES OF OPPOSITION, WHERE THEY WILL HAVE TO DEFEND AGAINST INCURSIONS BY THE COMMUNISTS ON THEIR LEFT AND SUAREZ' UCD ON THEIR RIGHT, WILL WEIGH AS HEAVILY UPON THEM AS THE CARES OF OFFICE UPON SUAREZ. SUAREZ AND PSOE SEC GEN GONZALEZ ARE THE STARS OF THE NEW POLITICAL GENERATION, AND THE TWO COULD DOMINATE SPANISH POLITICS FOR YEARS TO COME.

2. IF THE PSOE LEADERSHIP, WHICH VIEWS ITS CAMPAIGN INVOLVEMENT WITH THE PEOPLE IN ALMOST MYSTICL TERMS, HAS FOUND THE WINE OF SUCCESS EXHILARATING, IT ALSO HAS BEEN SOBERED BY THE UNEXPECTED RESPONSIBILITIES. THAT THE PSOE WOULD COME IN SECOND SEEMED QUITE LIKELY BY MID-CAMPAGIN, BUT ITS VERY STRONG SHOWING (28 PERCENT OF THE VOTE; 34 PERCENT OF THE LOWER HOUSE SEATS) SURPRISED EVEN THE LEADERSHIP (AND SCARED THEM FOR A MOMENT WHEN THEY THOUGHT THEY JUST MIGHT WIN), CATAPULTING THE PSOE INTO BECOMING "THE OPPOSITION" IN SPAIN'S NEW TWO AND A FEW FRACTIONS  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MADRID 04936 301344Z

PARTY SYSTEM. AND THEY ARE NOW MULLING OVER THEIR POSITIONS IN THE ADVENT OF THE CORTES. (A COMPANION MESSAGE OUTLINES THEIR MAJOR POSITIONS AND SEATS OUT THE ANALYSIS ON WHICH THE OVERLY STARK CONCLUSIONS GIVEN HERE ARE BASED.)

3. THE PSOE'S SUCCESS IN ATTRACING, ALONG WITH THE

COMMITTED SOCIALIST VOTE, A MASSIVE MODERATE FOLLOWING, IS AN IMPORTANT STEP IN THE PARTY'S EVOLUTION INTO A MORE WESTERN EUROPEAN STYLE SOCIALIST GROUPING. TO WIN AT LEAST A SHARE OF THE POWER IN THE NEXT ELECTIONS (POSSIBLY IN ABOUT TWO YEARS, DEPENDING ON THE NEW CONSTITUTION) THE PSOE WILL HAVE TO HOLD ON TO THIS ELECTRAL STRENGTH WHILE PROFITING BY ANY SUAREZ ERRORS AND MINIMIZING THEIR OWN MISTAKES. IN THE GIVE AND TAKE OF THE CORTES, THEY CAN NO LONGER RELY SO MUCH SIMPLY ON THE MISTAKES OF OTHERS. THEY WILL HAVE TO TAKE SPECIFIC POSITIONS WITH AN EYE TOWARD THEIR SEVERAL ELECTORATES.

4. THE PSOE LEADERSHIP, IN PARTICULAR, WAS NEVER SO RADICAL--DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS ARE NOT REALLY RADICAL NOTIONS--AS MANY HAVE MADE THEM OUT, BUT NEITHER ARE THEY A BUNCH OF WEST GERMAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATS. --THE GULF BETWEEN RICH AND POOR, THE ABUSES AND CORRUPTION OF THE FRANCO YEARS, AND THE DISTURBING SENSE OF CLASS MAKE SPAIN DIFFERENT FROM NORTHERN EUROPE. HENCE THE PSOE, BURDENED WITH A STRONG STRAIN OF RADICAL, THEOLOGICAL MARXISM, TAKES AN ALMOST ROMANTIC APPROACH TO THE TRANSFORMATION OF SPANISH SOCIETY, AN APPROACH COMPLICATED BY A PERHAPS EXAGGERATED CONCERN THAT THE COMMUNISTS MIGHT GNAW AWAY AT THEIR LEFT ELECTORATE. --MARXIST CANT AND OUR PAST SUPPORT FOR FRANCO HAVE CONDITIONED THEM TO AN ALMOST REFLEXIVE MISTRUST OF U.S. POLICY--  
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 MADRID 04936 301344Z

TRANSLATED INTO PARTY OPPOSITION NOT ONLY TO THE CURRENT BILATERAL MILITARY ARRANGEMENTS BUT TO NATO MEMBERSHIP. FORTUNATELY WEMNCOPENTER LITTLE PERSONAL ANIMOSITY AND THE LEADERSHIP--PERHAPS IN PART BECAUSE OF THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GERMAN SPD--IS MORE FLEXIBLE. NONETHELESS, SOME FORM OF OPPOSITION TO THE CURRENT BASES ARRANGEMENT IS A FOREGONE CONCLUSION AND, DESPITE GONZALEZ' FLEXIBILITY, WE WONDER IF HE WILL MOVE VERY FAR IN ALTERING THE PARTY'S POSITION ON NATO, AT LEAST IN THE SHORT RUN, GIVEN THE RUCKUS IT WOULD ENGENDER IN THE PARTY.

5. ALL THIS BESPEAKS A CERTAIN MEASURE OF INTERNAL CONTRADICTION WHICH WILL HAVE TO BE WORKED OUT OVER TIME. WHILE GONZALEZ IS A MODERATE OF THE LEFT AND IS NO THEOLOGIAN, HE HAS SHOWN NO INCLINATION--DESPITE THE POST ELECTORAL ADULATION--TO DIVERT FROM THE PARTY'S ESTABLISHED COLLEGIAL DECISIONMAKING AND, IN ANY EVENT, MUST DEAL WITH THESE NATIONAL AND PARTY REALITIES. THUS FUNDAMENTAL PARTY POSITIONS, DESPITE THE NUANCED CHANGES IN PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE, WILL LIKELY EVOLVE ONLY SLOWLY AND SPANISH SOCIALISM WILL OFFER A ROMANTIC, SOUTHERN FLAVOR EVEN THOUGH THEY WILL BE PRAGMATIC ON SUCH MATTERS

AS THE CONSTITUTION (E.G., FINDING A WAY TO ACCEPT THE MONARCHY). IF THERE IS TO BE A CONVERGENCE BETWEEN THE PSOE AND ANY OTHER EUROPEAN SOCIALST PARTY, WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THE FRENCH SOCIALISTS HOLD THE GREATEST ATTRACTION TO THE PARTY AS A WHOLE, EVEN THOUGH WE JUDGE GONZALEZ RELUCTANT TO ENGAGE IN ELECTORAL ALLIANCE WITH THE COMMUNISTS, AT LEAST IN THE SHORT RUN.

6. OBVIOUSLY, THE PSOE PRESENTS SOMETHING OF A CHALLENGE TO THE U.S. OUR POSTURE AND RECEPTIVITY TOWARD THEM WILL INEVITABLY HELP SHAPE THEIR EVOLVING ATTITUDES. ALL THIS IS COMPLICATED BY THE FACT THAT SUAREZ MAY RESENT ANYTHING THAT SMACKS OF ATTENTION TO THE ONE REAL RIVAL NOW ON THE SCENE. AT ALL EVENTS, SOME MUST REPRESENT THE LEFT IN  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 MADRID 04936 301344Z

SPAIN, AND THE SOCIALISTS--DESPITE THEIR FEISTINESS--ARE INFINITELY PREFERABLE TO THE COMMUNISTS. STABLER

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